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12th ANNUAL REPORT
of the
NATAL PARKS, GAME AND FISH PRESERVATION BOARD
for the period
1st APRIL, 1959 to 31st MARCH, 1960. 1-39

To the Honourable A. E. Trollip, Administrator of Natal.
Sir,

The NATAL PARKS, GAME AND FISH PRESERVATION BOARD has the honour to submit its report for the period 1st April, 1959, to 31st March, 1960.

A. GENERAL

The Board.

The Board members who held office since 1st December, 1956, ended their spell of duty on the 30th November, 1959. On the following day the new Board was appointed and the following nine members, hold office for three years until 30th November, 1962:—

- Mr. E. J. V. Grantham M.E.C., *Chairman.*
- Mr. D. E. Mitchell M.P., *Deputy Chairman.*
- Dr. H. B. Anthony.
- The Hon. Mr. Justice F. N. Broome,
- Mr. J. U. Friend, Mr. E. James,
- Dr. J. Pretorius, Mr. A. O. Simpson,
- Mr. A. M. Wood, M.P.C.

The Board met at their headquarters in Pietermaritzburg on nine occasions during the year.

Committees.

The Zululand Committee met only once, in April, 1959.

B. HEAD OFFICE

Financial.

A Statement of the Revenue and Expenditure for the period 1st April, 1959, to 31st March, 1960, is annexed and is self-explanatory.

Legislation.

Ordinance No. 19 of 1958 became effective as from 1st May, 1959, as the Coastal Fishing Conservation Ordinance. It had been assented to by the Governor-General-in-Council on the 19th September, 1958.

Ordinance No. 4 of 1959 was promulgated, and effected a few minor amendments to Ordinance No. 19 of 1958 mentioned above. The Wild Flower Conservation Ordinance No. 17 of 1959 was



HERD OF BUFFALOES

promulgated on the 20th September, 1959. In summary it provides for a short list of specially protected plants that may not be plucked or sold; whilst for the rest, no plants are protected against ordinary plucking by persons for their own use and enjoyment, but all plants are protected against sale.

Provincial Notice No. 413 of 1959 promulgated regulations providing for the establishment and maintenance of "Trout" and "General" (or other species) fish farms. Landowners wishing to engage in these pursuits are required to apply to the Board for registration of such farms. The control over the sale of fish was also amended to permit the sale of trout under licence only, whilst all restrictions on the sale of other species of fish were removed.

Provincial Notice No. 72 of 1959 proclaimed the Coleford Nature Reserve as from 1st December, 1959.

Provincial Notice No. 73 of 1959 deproclaimed a section of the Krantzklouf Nature Reserve required for road building purposes.

Specially Protected Game Returns.

As required by sub-section 6 of section 9 of Ordinance No. 11 of 1955, the following is the schedule of permits issued during the year, for the hunting, capture or keeping in captivity of specially protected game.

Hippopotami: 12 permits issued, 2 hippos destroyed.

Buffaloes: 3 permits issued, 2 buffaloes destroyed.

Mountain Reedbuck: 5 permits issued, 5 animals destroyed.

Rhinoceros: 2 permits issued, 2 Square-Lipped Rhinos destroyed.

Elephant: 1 permit issued, 1 elephant destroyed.

In May, 1959, it became necessary to destroy a rogue elephant which had caused the death of a native female. The carcass revealed a number of old rifle bullet wounds which no doubt explained this animal's behaviour.

Staff.

Mr. D. Bassett was appointed Assistant Accountant on the 1st April, 1959.

A new post of Public Relations Officer was created, and filled by Mr. A. de Burgh-Whyte, in September, 1959.

Mrs. B. Tonge, Fisheries Clerk, resigned in December, 1959, after many years of service to the Provincial Administration and the Board.

At the end of February, 1960, Miss J. Hamilton, who had for many years been the Director's "right-hand-man", resigned to return to her homeland. Miss Hamilton came to the Union in 1948 on a short holiday and stayed for 12 years. During this time, she made a material contribution to wild life conservation in this Province, and will be missed by the whole staff.

Another member of the staff who had served the Board loyally, in this case for 13 years, Ranger W. Cooper, retired in March, 1960.

Two Gate Wardens were appointed to control the entrance gates into the Hluhluwe Game Reserve.

C. ZULULAND RESERVES

Revenue.

The total Revenue from the Zululand Reserves again exceeded all previous records, this time by over £9,000. This represents a 45% increase over the previous year.

Compared with previous years, an increase in revenue occurred in all items except Launch tours, which had to be curtailed because of the low water levels in the St. Lucia Estuary. Revenue from the sale of hides and skins resulted from the Board's game management programme and an increase from the sale of bait was attributed partly to better hauls, and also to the increased price per carton as from mid-1959.

Housing.

Eight 2-bedroomed staff houses were built under contract during the year; three on the site allocated to Rangers at Hluhluwe; two for the Hluhluwe Gate Wardens, recently appointed; one at St. Lucia Estuary and two at the Umfolozi Game Reserve. Two staff square-davels were also completed in the Umfolozi Reserve for visiting senior officers and learner Rangers.

The Ndumu Ranger's residence should be completed early in the new financial year.

Equipment.

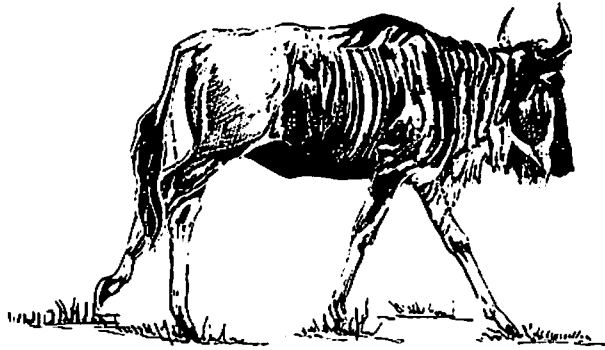
A very efficient hand-pump was used in Reserves for fire fighting, and those Reserves requiring them were issued with powerful beam torches for use during night raids. Officers' uniforms were improved this year.

Transport.

Where necessary, motor transport was replaced, and an all-aluminium shallow-draught barge was bought for launch tours on the St. Lucia lake; a further shallow-draught shrimping barge was also purchased for St. Lucia, as were some new outboard motors.

HLUHLUWE GAME RESERVE

The revenue earned at this reserve again exceeded all previous records. This can be attributed largely to increased accommodation tariffs introduced in September, 1957, and to new publications, maps, and car stickers sold by the Wardens in charge of the check gates now in operation at both entrances to the reserve. The establishment of the check gates has enabled the Board to keep accurate records of the number of visitors and vehicles entering the reserve. During the first six months of their operation 8,349 visitors and 3,624 vehicles passed through the gates. An analysis of the number of cars from each Province to visit the reserve is of interest.



BRINDLED GNU (BLUE WILDEBEEST)

Natal	1,833
Transvaal	941
Cape Province	315
O.F.S.	74
Foreign	240
Official Vehicles	221
		<hr/>
		3,624

Many Americans and commercial photographers from world-wide organizations visited the reserve this year. A visit was also paid to the reserve by the Minister of Agriculture, who was favourably impressed by the Board's activities.

A total of five new staff houses was built by private contract in this reserve during the year, and electricity was installed in them. Eighteen new huts were added to the native compound.

The total rainfall for the year was 29.32 inches. Good rains fell in May and October and during a cloudburst in January, $\frac{3}{4}$ " fell in ten minutes, causing many visitors' cars to become bogged. During the remainder of the year, extremely dry conditions prevailed; all pans in the reserve dried up, and the Hluhluwe River stopped flowing.

Game management measures during the year prevented over-grazing to a large extent and resulted in a decided improvement to the veld.

Game management operations continued throughout the year and warthog, wildebeeste and zebra populations were noticeably reduced.

The reserve was particularly free from serious fires; those which did occur were deliberately lit by natives inside the reserve fire-breaks, but were fortunately brought under control before any serious damage could be done. The fire-break programme was a race against time, because of the very dry conditions, but fire-fighting and the burning of fire-breaks was simplified by the use of a new

type of hand operated water pump, as well as by fire-beaters made from machine belting.

Soil erosion reached serious proportions in some parts of the reserve; a number of stone weirs built in dongas proved very successful anti-soil erosion agents. Some interesting anti-sheet erosion experiments have also been carried out. A large labour gang was used during the year on the problem of bush eradication under the direction of the Board's Ecologist.

The reserve fences have never been in such a good state of repair; bush poles in the boundary fence were replaced with iron fencing standards; this became necessary during the year, as a result of damage caused chiefly by buffaloes, wildebeeste and rhinos.

A new grid, the full width of the road, was constructed at the northern entrance to the rest camp. Tourist roads in the reserve were kept in very good order by the Board's heavy road maintenance equipment. Near the entrance gates roads were scraped and hardened and a number of pipe causeways were laid over streams traversed by various tourist roads. A map of all the roads in the reserve was published during the year and received an enthusiastic demand.

There was an increase in poaching activities up to August; poachers operated mainly in large gangs outside the boundaries of the reserve. These gangs proved very aggressive on several occasions, and charges had frequently to be laid for assault and resisting arrest.

One serious attack was made on a Game Guard while attempting to arrest two poachers. He was slashed with a cane knife and seriously wounded and his rifle was stolen; he managed to struggle to the main road where he was picked up and taken to hospital. His two assailants were eventually captured and the stolen rifle recovered. They were charged with attempted murder, but this was later reduced by the court to one of "assault with intent . . ."; one assailant was sentenced to 4 years, two of which were suspended, and the other to 3 months, but since he had already served 7 months whilst awaiting trial, he was released.

On another occasion the Ranger in charge suffered a severe knee injury while trying to arrest a poacher who fought back with a cane knife and assegai. The Board's well-known police dog, "Dingaan", played a prominent part in this skirmish but in spite of this the culprit escaped.

Court sentences imposed upon poachers were generally satisfactory, but on several occasions, previous convictions were ignored; this unfortunately resulted in ineffectual fines being imposed. Convictions were obtained against 59 natives arrested during the year and fines imposed amounted to £442 10s. 0d.

Straying goats constituted a nuisance during the year; large numbers were impounded, and their owners fined for allowing them to stray into the reserve. On one occasion, some impounded animals escaped, and were attacked by hyenas. The native owner was in due course fined and told by the Magistrate that no compen-

sation would be considered for the missing animals. Deaths of game animals from cold were reported in the reserve; particularly among nyala, bushbuck and waterbuck. Two buffaloes had to be destroyed by Rangers because they were endangering human life; another was killed by poachers and two Square-Lipped Rhinos died as a result of injuries inflicted upon one another during a fight. Two native Nagana workers, charged by a Black Rhino and a buffalo respectively, sustained injuries which required hospital attention.

UMFOLOZI GAME RESERVE

The building programme at this reserve was completed prior to the close of the financial year; apart from buildings mentioned previously, it included petrol and oil stores, an office for the Camp Superintendent and a number of native compound huts built to the Board's new design.

The Roads Department constructed a low-level bridge over the Black Umfolozi River, obviating the hazardous crossing which tourists were previously forced to make over the old causeway.

Since the official opening of the reserve in October, 1958, a steady increase in revenue has been encouraging, partly contributed to by the very successful Wilderness Trails conducted in this reserve. 839 Visitors stayed at the hutted camp during the current financial year, and it is anticipated that the revenue will increase considerably when the camp has been enlarged to take safari companies' patronage.

Wilderness Trails remained popular, and a Wilderness Trails Officer has now been appointed. During the year, 23 trails were conducted, involving 125 trailers, a number of whom came from countries outside South Africa. The most popular months were June, July and August, and although only two trails per month were scheduled, this number had to be increased during the popular months. These trails were also well supported by schools.

Drought conditions interspersed by occasional good rains prevailed and grazing was poor. During the dry spells, water had continually to be pumped



IMPALA. MALE

to the rhino pans and the pump was in operation for more months in the year than normal.

Fire-breaks were put in around the built-up areas and along portion of the western boundary but progress was slow because of changeable weather conditions.

"Army Worm" threatened the reserve in March, but it is pleasing to be able to report that they were completely checked by guinea fowls and francolins before any serious damage to the veld resulted.

A Boundary Commission visited the reserve during the year and recommendations were made to the Government; but at the close of the year under review, no settlement had been made in this regard.

Reports that lions were present in the reserve were frequent and continued throughout the year, but it was eventually established that only one male was present. It visited Gome camp and came as close as 100 yards from the verandah of the Ranger's house there. Later the Ranger's horse was attacked and two donkeys killed. The Wilderness area appears to be the territory most favoured by this feline.

Square-lipped Rhinos were seen regularly in most parts of the reserve but appeared to concentrate in large numbers in the western area. Wilderness Trailers always saw adequate numbers of these animals to make their trails worthwhile. Square-lipped Rhinos became more aggressive than usual, probably as a result of increased poaching activities and constant disturbance. Cows with calves were very unpredictable and one party of Wilderness Trailers were "treed" by a Square-lipped Rhino with a young calf at heel.

Game management in this reserve was mainly directed against warthogs, zebras and wildebeeste. Plans are being considered by the Board which will make it possible for neighbouring Native Chiefs to be supplied with carcasses from these game management operations, and it is hoped in this way to reduce poaching and other lawlessness.

Serious clashes occurred during the year between large gangs of poachers and the Board's Game Guards, one Game Guard receiving serious face wounds. Subsequent raids on native kraals in the area by the S.A. Police in conjunction with the Board's Rangers, resulted in the arrest of all the poachers involved in the affray and the recovery of four firearms. Only one accused was fined £65 or eleven months, the remainder £75 or fifteen months each. The wounded Game Guard was eventually discharged from hospital with the loss of one eye and serious facial disfiguration. A very rewarding patrol carried out by a Ranger and twelve Game Guards in December resulted in the capture of 14 poachers out of a gang of 20, and the recovery of 29 head of game destroyed by them, 15 of which were Mountain Reedbuck. Eight of the accused were discharged and the remainder received sentences of £15 or six weeks each.

Seventy-five natives were arrested for poaching during the period under review, the total in fines imposed by the Courts amounted to £704 10s. 0d.; six firearms and seven donkeys were confiscated and 84 native dogs destroyed. "Walkie Talkie" radio sets were successfully tried in various parts of the reserve during the year, and as a result a radio network system will be in operation early in the forthcoming financial year to assist further in combating poaching.

Horses are being brought more into use in the reserve for patrol work and Rangers and Game Guards are receiving training at a special school set up under the guidance of an officer of the Board. In this way it is possible for "all-mounted patrols" to deal with poaching activities.

A bogged Square-lipped Rhino was successfully rescued after several attempts, using a steel cable and two Landrovers. A similar attempt to rescue another rhino failed, the animal dying before the operation could be completed.

NDUMU GAME RESERVE

Visitors to this reserve are very impressed with its picturesque hutted camp and surrounding country.

A comparatively small building programme was carried out during the year. A Camp Superintendent's office, a large open shed, built from materials salvaged from the old N.R.C. house in the western area, a square-davel for staff use and a garage and oil store-room, were the major projects. The main water supply was improved by the digging of a new well and the installation of new pump equipment. The boundary fences were almost completed by the year's end.

Only one hippo death was recorded this year, that of a young bull which died after a fight. Although the crocodiles and hippos wandered during the dry periods of the year they always remained within the Reserve. The nyala and impala population has shown a steady increase over the year and some 30 impala lambs were born. A roadway to Banzi Pan was opened to enable tourists to enjoy the concentration of bird life there. A study of the small mammals in the reserve was undertaken by the Assistant Ranger and this has yielded a great deal of valuable information.

A census of native kraals in the reserve, carried out in May revealed that there were at least 978 native squatters residing there. Despite the fact that natives are evicted if convicted of snaring or killing game, this form of lawlessness continued, and 550 snares were removed, assegais and sjamboks confiscated and numerous dogs destroyed. A total of 205 natives were prosecuted and the fines imposed amounted to £181 5s. 0d. When a gang of 40 to 50 armed natives entered the reserve to fish illegally in Lake Bakabaka, a patrol succeeded in arresting five who were charged and convicted. The sentence imposed was a fine of 5s. 0d. or 5 days each. The same patrol confiscated 12 assegais, 16 fish traps and 105 lb. of fish. Illegal fishing activities take place mostly at night.

Fire-breaks were burned wherever possible along the reserve boundary but most of the western area was burnt out by native residents.

MKUZI GAME RESERVE

A major building programme envisaged for this reserve will proceed during the coming financial year. Huts to the Board's new design have been completed in the new native compound, and sites for new staff quarters and a new pump house have been cleared and building materials are in readiness. Large scale adjustments were made to the water supply pipe line both to the camp and the Bube drinking pan. Although the three rustic huts were fully booked over the Easter and other holiday weekends, there was a falling off of visitors throughout the rest of the year.

The Board's heavy road maintenance equipment was moved into the reserve during the year and construction of a network of tourist roads was started, as well as the regrading and surfacing of the main approach road within the boundaries of the reserve. The reserve boundary has been fenced up to the Umsundusi River. Certain sections of the fence required repairs during the year, due to damage caused by the high flood water levels of the river.

By September all pans had dried up with the exception of the Bube and Mkazeni, which were artificially fed by pumping and carried sufficient water throughout the dry months; animals and birds of every description were seen drinking at these pans. The water-hole in the south-west, near Dagela, was enlarged and used as a reserve supply for that area.

The roaring of a lion in the Mkuzi Reserve continued to be heard at regular intervals but the animal has not been seen by any member of the Board's staff. Reports were received that two elephants had been seen east of the reserve and one is said to have passed a short distance through it. The Black Rhino population has increased appreciably this year, and these animals were seen more frequently in large numbers; several small calves were also observed. A number of unfortunate animals was bogged down in the mud of the dried-out pans and the few remaining pools of undrinkable water harboured masses of trapped fish which were devoured by flocks of pelicans, vultures and Marabou Storks.

In 1959, a total of 151 impala were captured in this reserve following applications from farmers to stock their farms. This scheme for disposing of surplus game animals is proving popular and in 1960 a total of 450 animals will be required to meet applications already received from different areas suitable for restocking with impala. The 1960 capturing programme will be delayed because of the late lambing season.

The Learner Ranger has continued his research work into the behaviour of crocodiles, and a number of improvements to the crocodile pool was completed. Four young crocodiles each measuring 3 feet, were exhibited in the Natal Pavilion at the Union Festival

in Johannesburg in March and proved a great attraction. Members of the Board's staff in attendance at the exhibition exercised great care to ensure that the saurians suffered no ill effects from the variable weather conditions which prevailed.

The reserve was not without fire hazards during the year, the worst fire occurring in the western area in July, when some 20,000 acres were burnt. Several small fires were reported but without serious damage. The fire-break burning programme was facilitated this year by the use of a tractor and implements.

Poaching continued to be a major problem. A large number of arrests was effected during the year and culprits convicted. Some sentences were lenient but others very severe. A native with charges against him which dated back to 1954 was apprehended, tried and sentenced to £50 or six months, with a further fine of £25 or three months, for obstructing an officer in the performance of his duty. One "snare-setter" was fined £40 or four months.

During a serious clash between Game Guards and a gang of poachers one of the latter was killed. On another occasion a Ranger was forced to fire warning shots when approached by an overwhelming party of aggressive poachers. Snaring was prevalent in all areas and over 600 snares were removed; of these, 162 were collected in August alone. Twenty-seven native dogs were destroyed. In all, 63 natives were prosecuted and the fines imposed amounted to £521. Many raids on native kraals were organized and a number of different types of weapons were destroyed, including traps and snares.

Fences were found to have been deliberately cut on one occasion and the damage crudely repaired by the offender after he had allowed his cattle to pass through. There was insufficient evidence

for a conviction in this case, but on other occasions cattle-owners were fined for trespassing. During the year, illegal hunting by both Europeans and Natives took place on the nearby Nxwala Estate, and serious lawlessness by large gangs was reported from the area. A party of European prospectors was ordered to leave the Reserve on one occasion and the samples they had collected were confiscated.

The severe drought conditions which kept the Mkuze River dry for most of the year were relieved by a rainfall of 4 inches in November and over 7 inches during February, which caused the river to come down in flood several times. These welcome late rains transformed the Reserve almost overnight, for they filled up minor pans, and grazing was once more plentiful. The total rainfall for the year was only 18.26 inches, the highest fall on one day being 2.83 inches. Temperatures during the summer rose to 106°F. while the minimum temperature recorded was 52°F. Strong winds and cold spells were experienced during winter; a cyclone at the beginning of the year uprooted trees and scattered them over the veld. During January and February there appeared to be two distinct rainfall regions in the reserve; in the north-east and north-west good rains fell, while the south-east and south-west were less fortunate.

KOSI BAY NATURE RESERVE

At a meeting held in Kosi Bay in March, 1959, between the Bantu Affairs Commissioner and local Native Headmen, it was agreed that a 100 ft. channel be maintained entirely free of fish kraals and this channel was duly pegged out by the Board's Ranger for all to see. It is unfortunately true that certain individuals built kraals which repeatedly encroached upon the agreed channel and on one occasion it was necessary to enlist the assistance of the S.A. Police to curb these activities.

Throughout the year regular day and night patrols were maintained to combat a great deal of illegal netting which occurred, particularly during the hours of darkness. Fifty nets were removed but only a few net owners were arrested. A total of 20 natives was prosecuted, the fines imposed amounting to £27. One case of assault against the Board's Game Guards occurred during the year. Three armed natives engaged in illegal netting attacked and overcame two Game Guards and stole their hat badges and assegais. The culprits were eventually caught, the stolen articles recovered and fines of £10 each were imposed on two of the accused, the third having left the district. Two other natives were also fined £15 and £10 for illegal netting.

The total hippo population in the Kosi Bay System is 16; during the year four calves were born, two of which have remained continually with one cow, suggesting that they could be twins.

Two unexpected visits were paid by Elephants during the year. They were seen once feeding along the main channel in November and later in December along the banks of Lake Nhlanga. The visits



BLACK RHINOCEROS

to combat suspected illegal night fishing activities and to check on fishing licences.

The increase in snaring activities is attributed to the influx of native labour to neighbouring farms. Many snares were found and removed and a few offenders charged for minor contraventions of Wild Life Ordinances.

Vervet monkeys, migrating in large numbers from the coastal bush in search of food, constituted a nuisance to the local residents, who also reported the presence of a Lynx in the Reserve.

Due to the improved condition of water in both the Talmadge and Ackerman Pans, more aquatic birds than usual were to be seen, while small numbers of antelope also went there to drink.

Anti-malarial spraying was maintained regularly throughout the year and it is gratifying to know that the area has now become almost free from mosquitoes.

DHLINZA FOREST NATURE RESERVE

Close control of this reserve, with emphasis on searches for snares, was maintained throughout the year and some nooses were removed from the area adjoining the new school in Eshowe. Trial pits were dug along the western boundary of the reserve to determine the soil drainage potential in the area, after the Union Health Department had asked for this information in connection with their investigations into the possibility of establishing a native cemetery in the area.

A termite mound situated to the north-east of the cricket oval entrance, which was only 18 inches high eighteen months ago, has now reached a height of nearly 5 feet on a base of 5 feet in diameter. Specimens of the ant inhabitants have been sent to the Natal Museum for identification, because it is expected that they are a new species in this area. Tick infestation throughout the forest continued, despite the absence of cattle from the reserve. A very successful and well patronized "Passion Play" was presented by the local Round Table Organization at "Bishops Seat" in the reserve.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

Extracted from Rangers' Reports

Ranger in Charge Umlalazi Nature Reserve, February, 1960

Although it is known that Yellow-billed Kites take carrion the Ranger reports having seen one with what appeared to be a yellow cobra of about 2 feet in length. The airborne bird, which gripped its victim around the neck in its beak, was watched for some ten to fifteen minutes during which time it seemed to prevent the snake from any retaliatory action by extremely erratic flight until it disappeared in the distance.

Ranger in Charge Richards Bay Park, February, 1960

The Game Guards on the look-out for illegal nets found fifteen during the month. On one particular occasion two natives arrived at dawn on the opposite side of the lake near the Narrows and proceeded to row across to where they had left their nets. Just as they reached the middle of the Lake, a herd of hippos surfaced behind them and the bull chased the poachers who dived off their flimsy raft and swam to the shore in safety, leaving their illegal netting operations for another day.

Ranger in Charge False Bay Park, July, 1959

"Percy" the tame foundling Pelican from False Bay camp was taken to Lane Island and left in the company of the Pelican breeding colony there. However, it was a short sojourn, as "Percy" arrived at the camp the following morning having swum the seven miles back. He is of course unable to fly as one wing is badly deformed.

Ranger in Charge False Bay Park, December, 1959

Because of the quick action of a Ranger, a crowd of Europeans and natives were left gaping on a recent occasion at the Hluhluwe Station. It happened that the Ranger arrived on the scene when three dogs and about 10 natives were closing in on a Grey Duiker ram, which they had chased and eventually cornered between a donga and a fence; the chase seemed in no way to perturb some onlookers. Jumping off his vehicle, the Ranger ran towards them, shouting to distract their attention. One dog was already nearing the duiker, and a native was about to club the animal, when the Ranger's boot contacted him and sent him sprawling. The duiker was snatched up in front of the dog and taken to the vehicle. The creature's heart was beating very fast, and it lay quite still. The natives and dogs dispersed in all directions, and "moans" of being "done out of" their meat could be heard. Some of the onlookers supported the Ranger's actions, and he in turn was happy to know that the duiker had been saved from a cruel death. The animal was taken back to the reserve and released there.

Ranger in Charge Umfolozi Game Reserve, May, 1959

Whilst on patrol in the Ncebe area, the Ranger, accompanied by a Game Guard, was involved in a rather alarming incident with a Square-lipped Rhino bull. They were making their way along an open hillside, on the lookout for some wildebeeste, when they passed a solitary rhino bull grazing peacefully. Intent on several wildebeeste on the opposite side of the hill, they carried on. Several seconds later the Guard shouted and, looking back, the Ranger saw the rhino bull come thundering down the hill behind them. They took off down the hill at speed. The rhino appeared to be making for the Guard, who was running a little to the Ranger's left, when it suddenly changed its direction and with its head down and ears laid flat, came up behind the Ranger, snorting loudly. He tried

zigzagging, in an attempt to shake it off, but without success, so did a sharp turn to the right, but the bull swung in the same direction with great agility and, going full tilt, was almost at his heels. The Ranger did the only thing possible, he dived into a hole, over which the rhino crashed, landing on its chin on the other side and sliding along for several feet on its jaw. Afterwards it was seen that both hind feet and one foreleg of the rhino had slid into the sides of the hole, but did nothing more than cover the Ranger with earth. The rhino moved off after this, leaving a very shaken Ranger to remove soil from eyes and ears.

Ranger in Charge Mkuzi Game Reserve, March, 1960

While on a tour of inspection of routes for the roads it is proposed to build in the reserve, the Ranger observed a large group of vultures on the hillside. It was obvious that something was preventing them from feeding on the carcass of a wildebeest. On closer observation, it was discovered that a Black-backed Jackal had got its head through a hole torn in the wildebeest's belly, and could not extricate itself. It is possible that the hole was made by the vultures in the first instance, and the jackal, a late intruder, had been feeding through it. The jackal had apparently taken its time feeding, and as the day was hot and dry, the skin shrank until it formed a collar which firmly held the jackal captive. The skin was carefully cut to release the animal, but the only "thanks" the Ranger received was a sharp snap at his hand, which fortunately missed its mark!

NATAL RESERVES

GIANT'S CASTLE GAME RESERVE

The Ranger's house at the Injasuti outpost was the main building enterprise undertaken at this reserve during the year; the carting of building materials proved an arduous task but the difficulty was overcome and the house was finished by January. This outpost will provide a better means of controlling poachers in that area. Fencing of the Reserve, under similarly difficult conditions resulting from the ruggedness of the terrain, continued, and over 70 miles of the boundaries have now been fenced and some internal fencing has also been completed.

Day and night patrols against poaching were maintained; some arrests were effected, but a few culprits escaped under cover of darkness. A gang of five poachers was arrested in the Injasuti valley and five hunting dogs destroyed; two of the former were fined £50 or four-and-a-half months, the remainder receiving strokes as punishment; one of the gang who had been wounded but escaped was arrested several months later and he was fined £45 or four months. Poachers were known to have been armed, so that extra precautions had to be taken by Game Guards and it proved necessary to establish some new Guard outposts.



ZEBRA

As fencing operations progressed during the year eland became more concentrated within the reserve boundaries, but a few broke out in certain places and it became necessary to reinforce the fences. As is usual with this species, they divided into small groups during the winter months and came together again as the weather warmed up. A good breeding season resulted in a very satisfactory number of calves this year. The White-tailed Gnu herd continued to thrive and four calves were born during the year. Two animals were missing for a long period, one of which eventually returned to the herd, but the other one was found to have died, presumably from natural causes. Two further animals had to be destroyed after they had accidentally broken legs, and a young calf sustained mortal internal injuries after having been kicked or trampled by the herd. The total population of Gnus in the Reserve is now 22.

A lammergeyer, nesting in the reserve, reared a chick during the latter half of the year, and was photographed by officers of the Board's staff. The Stanley Crane population increased considerably during the year under review.

The hutted camp was heavily booked for all holiday periods and winter snows provided a great attraction to visitors. Visitors accommodated in the hutted camp were:—

From Natal	668
From other Provinces.. .. .	161
From outside the Union	29
Total number of cars to enter the Reserve	825